

NEWS

From the Office of

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Los Angeles County Contributes to High Desert Corridor JPA

The High Desert Corridor Joint Powers Authority, comprised of San Bernardino and Los Angeles Counties, got a boost this week when the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority agreed to contribute \$500,000 toward the operating expenses of the JPA.

"This is great news for this important project. The Los Angeles MTA's contribution, along with \$500,000 already committed by the City of Victorville, will ensure that the JPA can operate while we focus our energies on getting the corridor funded and built," said San Bernardino County Supervisor Brad Mitzelfelt, who also serves as chairman of the JPA.

The JPA in December issued a Request for Proposals asking engineering and financial firms to submit strategies for how to finance and build the High Desert Corridor, a proposed 50-mile expressway that would link Palmdale to Interstate 15 in northern Victorville and continue on to Apple Valley.

The expressway will function as a major new freight corridor, taking pressure off of freeways in the Inland Empire and Los Angeles which are frequently congested with truck traffic. It will also serve as a major catalyst for economic development in the High Desert of both counties.

A technical advisory committee of the JPA is now examining proposals submitted in March by major engineering firms for how to fund and build the project. It is envisioned as a public-private partnership, in which the private sector would have a major role. Public-private partnerships are strongly supported by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger as a way to build much-needed infrastructure more quickly and with lower costs to the taxpayer.

The expressway would serve Southern California Logistics Airport in Victorville, which is emerging as a major "inland port." Freight would move out of the Los Angeles basin, ports and inland valleys, primarily by rail, and be loaded onto trucks at a new inter-modal facility already being developed at SCLA. A similar inland port complex is also envisioned for Palmdale.

The route would provide an alternative for thousands of trucks and cars and would divert significant traffic from Highways 138 and 18 in the High Desert as well as Highways 60 and 210, Interstate 10 and, most importantly, Interstate 15 through San Bernardino County, the Cajon Pass and the Victor Valley.

“This project can bring high-paying jobs to the region, improve traffic all over Southern California, and reduce commuter traffic by allowing High Desert residents to work near their homes instead of having to drive down the hill every day,” Mitzelfelt said.